

A HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE

ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE FORMATION OF THE

Congregational Church,

HOLLISTON, MASSACHUSETTS,

JUNE 11, 1879,

By REV. GEORGE M. ADAMS,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

J. C. CLARK PRINTING CO., SO. FRAMINGHAM, MASS.

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Anniversary Services.

The Congregational Church in Holliston, Mass., celebrated its 150th anniversary, Wednesday, June 11, 1879. The Church was formed Oct. 31, 1728, O. S., so that the exact anniversary, allowing for the change from old to new style, was Nov. 11, 1878. The celebration was postponed to the more pleasant season of the year.

In response to special invitation, a large number of the former members of the church and congregation returned to Holliston for the occasion. Many were present also from the neighboring towns. The meeting-house was very fully and beautifully decorated with flowers, ferns, evergreens, mottoes and emblematic designs. The public exercises of the day commenced at ten o'clock, A. M., as follows:—

VOLUNTARY ON THE ORGAN.

ANTHEM.

“O, PRAISE THE MIGHTY GOD.”

SELECTIONS OF SCRIPTURE.

FROM PSALMS lxxvii ; lxxviii ; AND cxxii.

READ BY REV. HENRY S. KELSEY, FROM THE ANCIENT BIBLE PRESENTED
TO THE CHURCH IN 1728, BY HON. THOMAS HOLLIS OF LONDON.

SINGING:

"COME, MY BELOVED, HASTE AWAY."

PRAYER.

BY REV. T. D. P. STONE.

HYMN.

"LET CHILDREN HEAR THE MIGHTY DEEDS."

BY CHOIR AND CONGREGATION.—TUNE, ST. MARTIN'S.

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE.

In the middle of the discourse the pastor paused, and the choir and congregation sang to the *old* tune of Lenox two stanzas of the hymn:—

"YE TRIBES OF ADAM, JOIN."

PRAYER.

BY REV. J. T. TUCKER, D. D.

HYMN.

"LO! WHAT A GLORIOUS SIGHT APPEARS."

BY CHOIR AND CONGREGATION.—TUNE, NEW JERUSALEM.

BENEDICTION.

BY REV. H. H. JESSUP, D. D.

At the close of the morning services, the strangers present and as many of the church and congregation as could be accommodated, dined in the Town Hall, about five hundred being served. In the afternoon the exercises were resumed in the meeting-house, as follows:—

VOLUNTARY ON THE ORGAN.

ANTHEM.

“JERUSALEM, MY GLORIOUS HOME.”

PRAYER.

BY REV. ELIJAH CUTLER.

HYMN.

“O LORD, OUR FATHERS OFT HAVE TOLD.”

BY CHOIR AND CONGREGATION.—TUNE, NORTHFIELD.

ADDRESSES.

BY REV. T. D. P. STONE, REV. JOSHUA T. TUCKER, D. D. AND
REV. HENRY S. KELSEY,

FORMER PASTORS OF THE CHURCH; ALSO BY

REV. EDMUND DOWSE, REV. WILLIAM L. GAYLORD, REV.
HENRY H. JESSUP, D. D., REV. CALVIN CUTLER, REV.
FRANKE A. WARFIELD, HON. ROBERT R. BISHOP,
AND HON. ELIJAH A. MORSE.

These addresses were interspersed with singing. A letter was read from REV. WILLIAM H. SAVAGE, the only living ex-pastor of the church not present. The concluding exercises were:—

ANTHEM.

“O FATHER ALMIGHTY!”

PRAYER.

BY REV. THOMAS C. BISCOE.

BENEDICTION.

BY REV. MARTIN S. HOWARD.

In the evening a social reunion was held in the lecture-room and parlors of the church.

Only a brief sketch of the exercises of the day is given here, as a very full and accurate report of them has been prepared and printed by Mr. J. F. Fiske.

Historical Discourse.

We commemorate to-day the act of a little company of men, who in the autumn of the year 1728 laid, among these hills, the foundation of a Christian church.

The town had been incorporated only four years previous, so that the history of the church in its earlier periods is almost identical with the history of the town. Indeed, the reason which was urged before the General Court for the incorporation of the town was, that the inhabitants of this region, which had been until that time a part of the town of Sherborn, might have a house of worship near at hand. And the General Court in granting the request, obliged the petitioners, "within the space of eighteen months [to] erect and finish a suitable house for the publick worship of God in the most convenient place for the accommodation of the inhabitants;" "and as soon as may be [to] procure and settle a learned orthodox minister of good conversation and make provision for his comfortable and honourable support." The date of the act of incorporation was December 3, 1724. On the twenty-first day of that month the first town meeting

was held, at the house of Timothy Lealand, which stood where Andrew J. Travis now resides, a mile north from here on the Framingham road. This meeting was for the choice of town officers, and no other business was transacted.

The second town meeting was held January 4, 1725. At this meeting the first business of the town beyond the choice of officers was undertaken as follows: "Voted to Erect a Meeting House Accomodable for the Inhabitants of said Town to worship God in on Lord's day and place it or set it on the South Easterly Side of Jasper's Hill so Called; by the road side on the Westerly Side of the Road; on the most Riseing ground the way goes over their, which is on the Honourable Colonel Browne's Farm." At the next town meeting, January 25, 1725, one hundred pounds was appropriated towards the erection of the building, and it was "voted that the Dementions of the Meeting House Shall be about Forty foot in Length about Thirty two foot in Bredth, and about Twenty foot post." On the 19th of April of the same year, the vote locating the house on the south easterly side of Jasper's Hill was reconsidered for the following reason: "in consideration the said place is so ill Convenient that the said House Cannot be so plased their as to Sute the whole Town;" and it was voted to "Erect and place the said Meeting House Near the willo run upon the South East Side of the Road that Leads by the South end of Jasper's Hill all which is on the Right Honourable Colonel Browne's Farm in said Holliston their the Said House is to be plased with his Honours Leave."

But Colonel Browne objected to this second location. Accordingly a third and final vote was passed July 13, 1725:

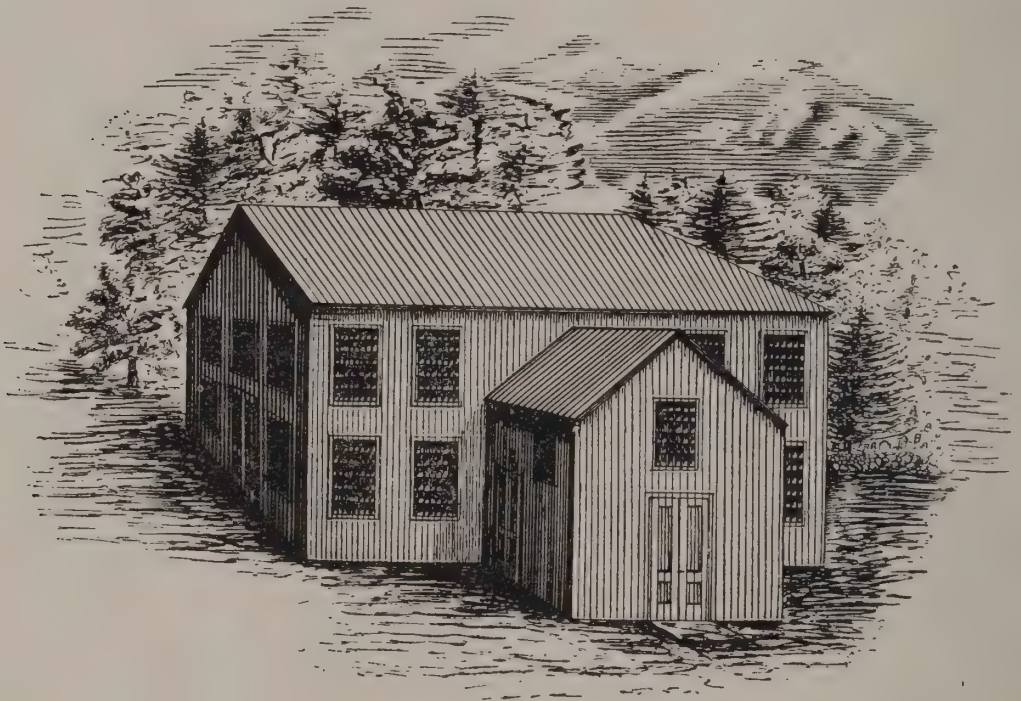
“to erect and place the sd Meeting House that we are now aboulding upon a knowl within five or six Rods of the Shadeing Tree if his Honour see Cause to admit of its being their, and if not then the sd House to be erected by the sd Shadeing Tree which was then voewed by us Inhabitants of Holliston.” The house was placed nearly where the Town-house now stands, so that the “Shadeing Tree” was no doubt in that vicinity. A committee was appointed Oct. 11, “to treat with the Honourable Colonel Browne for land for the accommodation of our Meeting House and a Buring place and Training field and land for a Minister or Ministry as his Honour shall think fitt.” There is no record in the town books of the result of this committee’s action, but Mr. Fitch in his Century Sermon says that the meeting house “was located on land containing about three acres and a half, given to this town by Colonel William Browne of Salem, Massachusetts, to be perpetually occupied as a site for a meeting house and burying ground.” This gift of Colonel Browne included the southern half of the cemetery adjoining the Town Hall, the ground on which the Town Hall stands, the northern portion of the Common and a part of the ground occupied by this house.

At a town meeting, November 29, of the same year, “it was proposed to the Inhabitants to know their Minds Concerning preaching, and where they wold have the word preached unto them, which being tryed by a vote; it was then voted to have the word preached in Colonel Browne’s New house in sd Town until our meeting house be fitt for that use.”¹ At the same town meeting a tax of twenty

¹There is some reason to suppose that “Colonel Browne’s New house” was the one which

pounds was laid "to be employed towards the defraying the Charge of the sd preaching," and a committee was raised to provide a minister.

The erection of the meeting house seems to have gone on rather slowly. January 3, 1726, sixty pounds had been expended upon it. December 18, 1727, it was so far com-



²FIRST MEETING-HOUSE IN HOLLISTON; ERECTED 1725; TAKEN DOWN 1823.

pleted that the town meeting was held there. Probably it began to be used for public worship in the year 1728, but so

formerly stood just beyond the present residence of Seth Thayer. Deacon James Russell afterwards occupied it and kept there the first house of entertainment in Holliston. The tradition respecting the two noble elms which now stand there, is that there were, a century ago, three sisters in the Russell family, and three elms were set out, one for each sister; that one sister died young, and one of the elms died.

²We are much indebted to Mr. U. Waldo Cutler for the drawings from which the electro-typed illustrations in this pamphlet have been taken. The sketch of the first meeting-house has been made from the description in the town records, and from the recollections of the oldest citizens. It is represented here in its original form, as it was before the enlargement of 1787.

late as April 27, 1731, the sum of thirty pounds was appropriated "towards finishing" the house. The whole amount appropriated by the town for the meeting house was three hundred and fifty pounds.

On the 26th of June, 1727, more than a year before the formation of the church, Mr. JAMES STONE was chosen in town meeting "to be the Gospel minister in Holliston," and his salary was fixed at seventy-five pounds, with one hundred pounds as a settlement. It was also provided that the salary should increase five pounds when ten families were added to the town, and ten pounds when twenty families were added. Mr. Stone's reply is dated Newton, November 25, 1727. He expresses much affection for the people of Holliston, and is inclined to accept their invitation, but is somewhat in doubt whether the salary offered him will be sufficient for his support. There was therefore a subscription made to increase the amount offered as a settlement and under date of Holliston, May 27, 1728, Mr. Stone fully accepts the invitation to become the minister of the town.

Judge Samuel Sewall of Boston, at this time owned a tract of two hundred acres in Holliston, and the town "appointed a committee to address him as to the obtaining of a piece of land toward the settlement of a minister." Judge Sewall and his children by deed of gift bearing date May 9, 1728, conveyed to this committee in trust eleven acres of land "for ye sole proper use, benefit and behoof of ye first Orthodox Congregational or presbyterian minister of ye Gospel which shall be settled in ye sd town of Holliston and to his heirs and assigns forever." This eleven acres included the present site of the Hollis House, and extended north and south from

there along the west side of Washington Street a quarter of a mile. After the ordination of Mr. Stone this tract was conveyed to him by deed.

All was now ready for the formation of the church. The meeting house was completed sufficiently for use and the chosen minister was on the ground. On Thursday, October 31, 1728, O. S. eight men, including the Pastor elect, were formed into a Christian Church, subscribing the following covenant:—

“We, whose names are hereunto Subscribed; (apprehending ourselves Called of God to enter into Church Fellowship) Do this day in the name of Christ, humbly & heartily Avouch the Lord whose name alone is Jehovah, Father, Son and holy Ghost, to be our God and the God of our Seed; Entirely & Everlastingly devoting and Dedicating both our selves & ours unto his holy Fear & Service, according to his Word, Cleaving unto him & Accepting of him as our Chief Good & Last End; Promising & Covenanting to Walk with God and one another as God’s Chosen People and a Particular Congregationall Church ought to do; Complying with the whole will of God So far as he has been pleased or Shall further please to discover his Mind to us by his Spirit, word & providence; Bewailing all those ways of Sin & folly, by Walking in which we have Provoked his Majesty, dishonoured his Name, grieved his Spirit & Contradicted the Rule of his holy word; We do freely & heartily acknowledge, Imbrace & Submit unto the Lord Jesus Christ as head of the Church, Prophet, Priest & King of our Souls, the only Mediator between God & Man & Surety of the New Covenant, Looking for acceptance of our Persons & Services only in the beloved; We do also Expressly take God the holy Ghost for our Sanctifyer, Teacher, guide & Comforter. And by the help of his gracious Influences, do more particularly Covenant & Promise to attend family & Closet as well as public Duties & Means of grace & in all watch against Formality & Hypocrisy: That we will also maintain Subjection unto Christ in the officers God hath Set in the Church, attending upon & Submitting unto

the Seals & Censures according to the discipline of his house: That we will watch over our fellow members & be watched over by them according to Scripture Rule: That we will walk orderly in a way of Fellowship & Communion with other Churches of Christ about us, according to those Rules of holy order that he hath appointed: That the Lord may be one and his Name one in all his Churches: That we will Endeavor to bring up our Children in the Nurture & Admonition of the Lord: And in all things Labor to Cary it Towards those that are without as well as those that are within as becometh the Gospell of Christ, Beseeching God to dwell among us & be with us & for us & make us & ours a peculiar people to his Service and glory.

Now that we may keep Covenant with our God & one another we desire in Sincerity of heart, to deny all Self wisdom, Righteousness & Strength, & to Depend wholly & only on the alsufficiency of God, & wherein (after our best Endeavors) we shall fail & fall short, we would penitently & believingly, with sincere Renewed purposes, be waiting upon God by Jesus Christ for Repeated pardons to be sealed to us by the holy Ghost, To which father, Son, and holy Spirit, one God, the Same in Substance, & Equal in all Divine perfections be Dominion & fear with Eternall glory, Amen."

This covenant is signed by James Stone, (the pastor elect) William Sheffield, John Goulding, Jonathan Whitney, Timothy Lealand, Isaac Bullard, Thomas Marshall and Edmond Morse. All except the Pastor appear to have been previously members of the church in Sherborn. The wives of all of them joined this church by letter from the Sherborn church a few weeks later. These seven founders of the church were the leading men of the new town.

WILLIAM SHEFFIELD had a farm of two hundred and eighty acres in the west part of Holliston and was one of the largest tax payers in town. He lived probably where a house owned by Aaron Claflin now stands. He died in 1732.

CAPTAIN JOHN GOULDING was apparently the most prominent man in Holliston in those days. He was a man of "Herculean size and strength." His property was somewhat larger than that of any other citizen. He had a farm of more than six hundred acres on the north and east sides of Winthrop Pond. His house, a large and elegant structure for those days, stood on the hill northeast of the pond. The cellar is still to be seen in a little orchard on the west side of the road to Medway village, half way down the hill, this side the Calvin Rockwood house. Rev. Mr. Morse in his History of Sherborn and Holliston says, that in the earlier years of his residence there, Capt. Goulding and his family were repeatedly driven from their house at night by alarms of Indians, and took refuge in the garrison house of John Lealand, which stood two or three miles east, on the bank of South End Pond. Capt. Goulding was the person named by the General Court to call the first town meeting in Holliston. He was repeatedly chosen to fill the prominent town offices. He died in 1751.

JONATHAN WHITNEY lived somewhere beyond the house now occupied by Osborne Olmstead, in the north part of the town, and probably upon a road now little travelled, leading from Mr. Olmstead's by the old north end burying ground, towards the Town Farm. Mr. Whitney was a man of considerable property, and was often chosen one of the Selectmen.

TIMOTHY LEALAND was a man of great worth, and prominent in all town and church matters. He was chosen one of the first deacons of the church, and held the offices of selectman and town treasurer for many years. His father, Ebenezer,

came in his advanced years from Sherborn to live with Dea. Timothy, and was a man so esteemed in Holliston that when pews were built in the church, and the locations for the same were assigned according to the tax which each had paid in building the house, a single exception was made, giving Mr. Ebenezer Lealand one of the most desirable positions.

LIEUTENANT ISAAC BULLARD, named sixth among the founders of the church, probably lived in the house now occupied by Osborne Olmstead. He was one of the selectmen chosen at the first town meeting and was repeatedly re-elected to that office. He had a son, Capt. Samuel Bullard, who was at a later day a very prominent man in the town.

THOMAS MARSHALL was chosen one of the first deacons of the church and held the office for nearly forty years. He was one of the selectmen for a greater number of years than any other person in the whole history of the town. His farm was probably near what is now Braggville.

EDMOND MORSE is the only one of the founders of the church of whose history I have been unable to learn any important particulars. He and his wife were dismissed to the church in Mendon in 1749.

I have spoken of the date of the formation of the church as October 31, 1728, O. S., which would correspond to November 11, 1728, by the present method of reckoning. Monday, the 11th of November last, completed one hundred and fifty years of the existence of the church, and would have been the exact day for our commemoration. For reasons of convenience we have set forward our actual celebration to this more pleasant season of the year.

The formation of the church probably took place very quietly. Mr. Morse in his history says that the church was formed at the house of Timothy Lealand, not, as we might have anticipated, at the meeting house. We have no record that any council of neighboring churches was called in connection with it. At a town meeting a week or two previous to the formation of the church (October 18, 1728), it was "voted that Thusday being the Seventh day of November next be kept as a Day of fasting to seek God's favour in the Gearthering and Settleing a Church in said Town preparatory to an Ordination, and that Wednes day being the Twentieth day of the Same month Should be the day, with God's leave for the Ordaing the Reverand Mr. James Stone."³ Probably the public interest gathered around the ordination rather than around the forming of the church. The town vote just quoted speaks of the gathering of the church as "preparatory to an ordination." But the perspective of one hundred and fifty years lifts up the more quiet event to its commanding position:

We can the better understand the changes which a century and a half have wrought, and can the better enter into the experience and life of the good men who laid the foundations for us, if we glance at the condition of the country in 1728. The number of inhabitants in Holliston did not probably exceed one hundred and fifty. There was no village. About thirty farm houses were scattered all over the town. The towns of Milford, Natick and Upton were not yet incorpo-

³Mr. Fitch's Century Sermon and our Church Manual place the formation of the church and the ordination of Mr. Stone on the same day, November 20. The original Church Records leave no doubt that there was an interval of three weeks between them.

rated. There was no church in either of those places, nor in Southboro nor Grafton. Worcester in 1718 had "fifty-eight humble dwelling houses," some of which were furnished with windows of diamond glass, and others were lighted through oiled paper. There was probably no Academy nor High School in Massachusetts. There were three colleges in the country — Harvard, Yale, and William and Mary's College in Virginia. Massachusetts had about one hundred and seventeen thousand inhabitants, a third of what Boston has now. In what is now the United States, there were, besides Indians, six hundred thousand inhabitants, less than the present population of Philadelphia. But of course there were then no United States. There were ten English Provinces along the Atlantic coast, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and Carolina. Florida was Spanish; Louisiana, including the valley of the Mississippi, belonged to France. Railroads, telegraphs, coal-gas were not yet known.

Beyond the sea, George II was king of England, and so sovereign of these colonies; Louis XV was king of France, Charles VI emperor of Germany, and Philip V king of Spain. Peter the Great of Russia had been dead three years. Dr. Isaac Watts was in the midst of his hymn writing, Voltaire was a brilliant young author, John Wesley in England, and Jonathan Edwards in this country were young men twenty-five years of age. Benjâmin Franklin, a little younger, was struggling to earn his living as a printer in Philadelphia. Frederick the Great of Prussia was sixteen years of age, and Maria Theresa of Austria, eleven. George

Whitefield was a boy of fourteen. George Washington, Benedict Arnold, André and Lafayette were not yet born. The same was true with respect to Oliver Goldsmith, Warren Hastings, Sir Isaac Newton, Burke, Fox, Pitt and Sheridan.

Mr. Stone was ordained first pastor of the new church on the 20th of November, 1728. There was a council of neighboring churches to assist in the ordination, but no record remains of the churches or pastors which composed the council. Mr. Stone was born in Newton June 8, 1704. He graduated at Harvard college at the age of twenty, and was about twenty-four and a half years of age at the time of his ordination. A house was built for him on the eleven acre lot given by Judge Sewall. The house stood on the ground now covered by the block next north of the Hollis House. At some time after Mr. Stone's decease it was kept as a public house, and was known as the "Stone Tavern." There, a generation ago, the daily stage coach drove up with a flourish and the blowing of a trumpet. A few years since the building was moved back on a private way leading west, just south of the Bank, and on the night of May 26, 1875, it was burned, setting fire to many other buildings.

When this town was organized, it was named in honor of Thomas Hollis⁴ Esq. of London, who had been a liberal benefactor of Harvard College. In response to this token of respect, Mr. Hollis sent to the church a Pulpit Bible, in which is the following inscription:—"The Gift of Thomas Hollis of London Marchant To the Meeting house in

⁴Mr. Hollis was born in 1659, and died in 1731. See more respecting him in "The First Ten Years of the Holliston First Baptist Church," an address by Rev. A. A. Bennett, note, page 3, and in Quincy's History of Harvard University.

Holliston whereof Mr. James Stone is Pastor and his Successors." The inscription is evidently very ancient, and there is some reason to suppose that it is in the handwriting of Mr. Hollis. The volume has had a varied history, which is given by Rev. Dr. Tucker as follows:—"It was a noble folio, printed at Oxford [in the year 1679], and for the first one hundred years of the church's history had been used by its pastors in the service of public worship. Becoming too much worn for that place, the selectmen had given it to the poor-house, where it would have been soon utterly finished, had not the worthy descendant of its donor, Dea. Thomas Hollis of Boston, got news of its whereabouts, after much search, and secured its possession by giving a new copy of the Scriptures to that institution. The church, on ascertaining this several years after, with some persuasion, induced Mr. Hollis to relinquish the valuable relic, which he greatly prized and which no money would have bought from him, by pledging itself to guard the treasure for all time to come from harm. The volume was too much dilapidated for rebinding, but by order of the church, a shrine was made for it, resembling a massive book, and in this elegant encasement the venerable heirloom is safe from further harm in the keeping of the church officers."

There is a somewhat doubtful tradition that Mr. Hollis sent also a bell for the meeting house, but that by fraud on the part of some one through whose hands it passed, a cracked bell was substituted, and offered to the proper authorities here, who refused to accept it. In 1731 the town took the first action in respect to education, voting to raise ten pounds "to Defrey the charge of a Reading and writeing

school." In 1738 three school houses were built, one near the meeting house, one in the north part of the town and one in the west part. The central school house was placed in the street east of the cemetery, as the deed of the three acres from Col. Browne did not allow even a school house to be placed upon that land. This school house stood there by the side of the road until about the year 1805.

In the fourteen years of Mr. Stone's ministry, one hundred and thirty-five members were connected with the church, one hundred of them being admitted on profession of faith. He died in July, 1742, of a malignant fever which was prevalent in the town. At the request of many of his friends, one of his latest sermons was published three or four years after his decease,⁵ from the text in John xvii, 4: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." The sermon was printed under the direction of Rev. Oliver Peabody of Natick and Rev. Samuel Porter of Sherborn. They say in their preface:—"The great Esteem which his own People, as well as those in the neighbouring Towns, had of the Author, for his great Sweetness of Temper, his good Humour, his instructive Conversation, his exemplary Piety, his great Diligence and Faithfulness in the Work of his Ministry, his Prudence in all his Conduct, his uncommon and excelling Gift in Prayer, and his orthodox, judicious and fervent Preaching; all which and many more desireable Qualifications were well known to shine in him: has caused many in Holliston and some in other Towns, to urge the Publication of this Sermon. It was an uncommon sickly Time among his People, and many died, when we

⁵The preface is dated "January 14, 1745, 6."

suppose Mr. Stone studied this Sermon, and he was almost constantly, Night and Day, visiting, advising and praying with the Sick, and (as we are well assured) sometimes for whole Nights together; being, as he said, willing to spend and be spent in the Service of the Souls of his People."

Mr. Stone was thirty-eight years of age at the time of his decease. His widow and three children survived him. His body was laid in the cemetery then adjoining the meeting house, and on the stone which covers the grave may still be read the following epitaph:—"Here lyes the Remains of the Rev^d Mr. James Stone; late Pastor of the Church of Christ in Holliston; who was ordained to the Pastoral office in November, 1728,= and in a time of more than ordinary Sickness and Mortality departed this life, July 28, 1742, in the thirty-ninth year of His Age. Who for His exemplary, unaffected Piety, diligence and faithfulness in y^e Ministry, compassionate Love and regard to His People in their Adversity and other desirable qualifications, Lived greatly Beloved and Died greatly Lamented." The town appropriated the sum of sixty pounds "to defray the charge of the Rev^d Mr. James Stone's funeral." Mr. Stone's salary for this year had been fixed at one hundred and fifty pounds.

The second Pastor of the church was Rev. JOSHUA PRENTICE.⁶ He was born at Cambridge, April 9, 1719, graduated at Harvard College at the age of nineteen, and was twenty-four years of age when he was ordained here, May 18, 1743.⁷

⁶So he always wrote his name. His descendants have returned to the earlier form "Prentiss."

⁷Mr. Prentice's salary was fixed at one hundred and forty pounds with a settlement of four hundred pounds: and was to be increased ten pounds per year, after the first two years, until it should reach the sum of two hundred pounds.

His ministry in Holliston extended over a period of forty-two years, being much longer than that of any other Pastor the church has ever had. Mr. Prentice lived in a house⁸ which stood nearly where the house of Mr. Z. Talbot now stands. His farm was bounded about as follows: by a line commencing in front of the old church, where the Town House now stands, passing south on Washington Street to Central Street, down Central Street to the school house beyond the railroad, thence due north to a point near the cider mill, thence westerly passing just north of the Methodist Church, and over Mount Hollis to a point near the house now owned by Augustine S. Bemis, then southerly to the "Willow Run," and easterly to Washington Street, not including the Town House and Cemetery.

During Mr. Stone's ministry, permission had been given to twelve persons to build pews in the meeting house, against the wall all around, leaving the middle of the room for common use. These twelve persons were probably the leading men in the town. In 1749 the town voted to "seat the Meeting house;" that is apparently, to assign the seats in the middle of the house to permanent occupants. And as preparatory to seating the house, they chose a Committee "To Dignify The Seats In The Publick Meeting House and to Lay before The Town A Ruel for The Seating of The Same." This Committee reported as follows: "Wee The Subscribers Being appinted a Committee To Dignify The Seats In The Meeting Hous of Holliston, wee are of The opinoin that The Fore Seat Below be The first Seat and The Second Seat Below Be s'ond Seate and The Third Seat

⁸The street in the picture is Washington Street. Church Street was not then opened.



MR. PRENTICE'S RESIDENCE.

Below and The front Seat In ye Gallery be Equal and The Forth Seat Below to be ye forth In Dignitee and The Side Gallery to be [fifth] In Dignitee and The fifth below To Be The Sixt In Dignitee and The Second Seat in the front Gallery Which is The Eight. Seat To be The Seventh Seate in Dignitee as We Have Set Them That The Invoice Taken In The Year forty eight Be The Rule With Having A Proper Regard to age." In 1750 the West Church in Medway was formed, and several families living in the southwest part of Holliston were, by act of the General Court, constituted a separate precinct and attached for ecclesiastical purposes to the West Parish in Medway. At a later period, by exchange of lands between the two towns, that precinct became a part of Medway. There were said to be ninety families in the town in 1750.

One of Rev. Dr. Tucker's antiquarian discoveries, while he was pastor here, attaches itself to the earlier part of Mr. Prentice's ministry. He gives account of it as follows: "One day when I was in the village tin-shop, my eye was caught by an unusually shaped vessel lying in a corner, on a pile of old refuse, which I picked up and examined. It was a flagon of perhaps three pints' capacity, bearing this inscription: 'The gift of Mrs. Dorothy Ware, late of Sherborn, to the church in Holliston, 1745.' Asking the workman where he had got it and what he was going to do with it, he answered that some one, he had forgotten who, had brought it in and sold it, and that he should melt it up for solder, as it was a much purer metal than could now be got for that purpose. I purchased it of him at his own price, and retain it as private property."

Ten years after Mr. Prentice's settlement occurred the "Great Sickness," as it is termed, a terribly fatal disease which raged in this town and in Sherborn for six weeks, and in that time carried off nearly one-eighth of the population of Holliston, forty-six out of about four hundred. Seven others are recorded by Mr. Prentice as dying of the disease, who were members of this church or congregation, but not inhabitants of the town. All the deaths, except three, occurred between December 18, 1753, and January 30, 1754. In the height of the disease there were from two to five burials each day. Fifteen members of the church were among the number who died. A brief record by Mr. Prentice respecting this calamity reveals the depression which must have overspread the whole community. "We are extreemly weakened," he says, "by the desolation death has made in many of the most substantial families amongst us. Four Families wholly broken up loosing both their heads. The sickness was so prevalent that but few Families escaped. For more than a month there were not enough well to tend the sick & bury the dead; tho' they spent their whole time in these services; but the sick suffered and the dead lay unburied; and that, notwithstanding help was procured and charitable assistance afforded by many in neighboring towns. We are a small town, consisting of about 80 Families and not more than 400 souls." In the Journal of the House of Representatives of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, under date "Martis 9 Die Aprilis, A. D. 1754," *i. e.* Tuesday, April 9, 1754, is the following entry:—"A Petition of the Selectmen of the town of Holliston, representing the distressed circumstances of said town, by reason of the grievous sickness and

mortality there, praying for the compassionate consideration of this Court for the reasons mentioned. Read and committed to Capt. Joseph Williams, Capt. Ashley and Mr. Greenwood to consider and report thereon." Later under the same date is this additional record:—"The Committee appointed this day on the petition of the Selectmen of Holliston reported. Read and accepted and ordered that the sum of twenty-six pounds, thirteen shillings and four pence be granted and paid out of the public treasury to the selectmen of said town (in consideration of the calamitous circumstances occasioned by the late mortal sickness that prevailed there) and by them, to be applied for the use and relief of such poor, indigent persons as may most need the same."

The next twenty years of the town's history seem to have passed quietly and prosperously. During that time the population doubled. One of the younger historical students of our town has given a lively sketch of "Holliston in the Last Century,"⁹ which makes one wish he would continue and extend his investigations. He says, speaking of the period just before the Revolutionary War:—"The town had now about eight hundred inhabitants, though there were no more than ten houses on the main street. The only store was kept by John Stone [the son of the first Minister of the town], in a little red building on the corner where Andrews' Block now stands. The Leland family, living in East Holliston, had begun to be prominent and public spirited. The Phippses had already given their name to Phipps Hill. Simeon Cutler, Colonel under Washington in the Revolution

⁹Mr. Newell L. Cutler in Holliston Transcript, Apr. 21, 1876.

kept the "tavern" near No. 5 school house, and near Braggville were the Loverings. The well informed and industrious Marshes lived on the Philip Pond place, and Timothy Rockwood, a man remarkably energetic and hard working, near No. 2 school house. Nearly all the people were land holders and very prosperous. The land was then much more productive than now, and bountiful crops were grown with much less labor. The houses were of good size and comfortable, with considerable of elegance in them, as the specimens of furniture which have come down to us indicate. Most of the people who came to this section early, were from thrifty Puritan families of England, many of whom had been in high social position there. The Phippses, for instance, descended from a nephew of Sir William Phipps. Joseph Morse was a brother of Col. Morse of Cromwell's army, and the Holbrooks who settled here belonged to a very illustrious family, many of which had been knighted in England. Jasper Adams, our first settler, was from the same family as John Quincy Adams, and the ancestry can be traced back to Sir John Adam who was a baron and member of Parliament in the thirteenth century."

When the oppressive measures of the British government began to arouse the free spirit of the American Colonies, this town was prompt to declare itself for the maintenance of the ancient liberties of the Province. As early as 1768 (May 21), a committee was chosen "to join with the committee of the Town of Boston as well as with the committees from the several towns of the Province in a convention to be held at Faneuil Hall in Boston, aforesaid, on ye 22^d of this Instant in order that such measures may be consulted and

advised as His Majesty's service and the peace and safety of this Province may require." The language of this resolution is carefully loyal, but the intent of it may in part be learned from the next vote, passed the same day, which was "to recruit the Town stock of ammunition, by purchasing a barrel of gunpowder, one hundred French flints and one hundred and fifty weight of balls." May 23, 1774, the Town chose a committee of correspondence with Boston and the other towns in the Province. July 4, 1774, "voted to double the Town stock of Ammunition." November 17, 1774, "voted to post up the names of all who shall sell or consume any of the East India Teas." At the annual town meeting in March, 1775, before proceeding to the election of Town officers, it was "voted that no man shall serve in any Town office or place whereever, who shall refuse or neglect to subscribe their consent to and compliance with the advice and assotiation of the last Continental Congress and that they shall be treated with neglect." A similar vote was passed at the March meeting, before the annual election of officers, in the years 1776, 1777 and 1779. May 20, 1776, after choosing Major Abner Perry as their representative, the town proceeded to give him the following instructions:—"Sir, as we have now chosen you to represent us in the great and general Court to be held at Watertown, on the 29th of this instant, May, we do agreeable to a resolve of the late General Court at their last sessions,—which is as follows, viz., That the inhabitants of each town in this colony ought in full meeting to advise the person or persons who shall be chosen to represent them in the next General Court whether that if the honorable Congress should declare them independ-

ent of the Kingdom of Great Britain, They, the said inhabitants will solemnly engage with their lives and fortunes to support them in the measure. To which the Inhabitants of the Town of Holliston being legally assembled, would humbly reply (viz.) that the said Hon^{ble} Congress are (under God) the most Competent judges of matters of such vast importance to these colonies; we would therefore refer it to their wisdom and do solemnly engage with our lives and fortunes to support them in the measure if they (whom we look upon as the guardians of our Liberties) shall judge it to be best."

But perhaps the most convincing evidence of the thorough patriotism of the town is seen in the large sums of money which were voted and paid for carrying on the war. In the year 1776 the town granted four hundred pounds for the defence of the country. This was when all the other expenses of the town, including the Minister's salary were less than two hundred pounds. It is recorded that at a town meeting in September, 1776, "the Reverend Mr. Prentice personally appeared and generously gave ten pounds to the Town towards defraying the charge that has arisen in this town by the present war." In 1777 the town granted for war expenses one thousand, one hundred and forty-nine pounds, all other town expenses being one hundred and seventy pounds. In 1778 the war appropriation was two thousand, one hundred and ninety-one pounds. In 1779, currency had begun to depreciate, and the town granted for war expenses more than four thousand pounds, which was equal to about two thousand pounds in silver. In 1780, currency was not worth more than one-thirtieth or one-fortieth of its nominal value, and the town appropriated for

the war seventy-two thousand pounds, which was still equal to about two thousand pounds in silver. In 1781 the war appropriations were twenty-four thousand, seven hundred and fifty pounds old currency, and six hundred pounds silver money; equal to about eight hundred and fifty pounds in silver.

Mr. Morse in his history mentions Col. Abner Perry, Maj. Jacob Miller and Capt. Daniel Eames from this town as having been conspicuous among the officers of the army. Col. Simeon Cutler has already been named as serving under Washington. In all the patriotic action of the town the members of the church held a prominent place. Col. Abner Perry, a member of the church, was repeatedly chosen to represent the town in the first conventions of the province, and was afterwards an officer in the army. Joshua Hemenway and Timothy Rockwood also represented Holliston in some of the earlier steps of resistance to oppression, and were prominent as patriotic leaders in the town. These were members of the church. Dea. Aaron Phipps, Dea. Thomas Russell, Maj. Jacob Miller, Daniel Mellen, Abner Johnson, Capt. Staples Chamberlain, Joseph Bigelow, all members of the church, are among those whose names appear most frequently and prominently in the patriotic action of the town, or in evidences of personal sacrifice for the country.

The period of the Revolutionary struggle was not a time of increasing numbers in the church. The additions were few from 1770 to the close of Mr. Prentice's ministry. Mr. Prentice's health was so impaired in the later years of his life that he preached only occasionally. His salary had fallen into arrears and some misunderstanding arose between

him and the town as to the proper amount due to him. June 1, 1784, the town "voted to dismiss the Rev. Mr. Joshua Prentice from the work of the ministry in said town." But no provision was made for calling a council, and Mr. Prentice was still legally pastor. In the course of the following year an agreement was reached as to the amount due Mr. Prentice, and he was regularly dismissed by a council which met at some time between April 4, 1785, and September 26 of the same year. By advice of the dismissing council the town exempted his estate from taxation during his lifetime, and appropriated a seat in the meeting house to his use.¹⁰

Mr. Prentice died April 24, 1788, at the age of sixty-nine years. He was both the oldest and the youngest pastor this church has ever known, having been settled at the age of twenty-four, four months younger than his predecessor, and dismissed at the age of sixty-six. Mr. Fitch says of Mr. Prentice, "his religious sentiments were Calvinistic: and his preaching was plain, instructive and evangelical." His remains were laid in the cemetery near us, where the stone bears the following inscription: "Mark the Perfect man and behold the Upright; for the end of that man is peace; Sacred

¹⁰Mr. Prentice had nine children, of whom three died young. Joshua was United States Collector at Marblehead. Thomas was the Pastor at Medfield. Henry was a merchant in Boston, and is said to have been Captain of one of the bands of the "Boston Tea Party," which destroyed the tea in Boston harbor in 1773. Appleton graduated at Harvard and was a merchant in Boston. Margaret became the wife of Rev. Timothy Dickinson. Elizabeth, the youngest, lived in Holliston to an advanced age, doing good and leaving behind her a precious memory. Rev. Thomas Prentice, the second son, was a man of marked ability and energy of character. He was among the earliest leaders in the Temperance Reformation, being one of a small number who originated the society known for many years as the "Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance." In days when almost everybody used strong drink he could say that he never took a glass of spirituous liquors but once in his life. He received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Harvard College. (Sprague's *Annals of the American Pulpit*, I, 678.)

to the memory of the Rev. Joshua Prentice, Forty-two years Pastor of the Church in this Town; he departed this life April 24, 1788. Aged 70 years.¹¹

The Saints while ages roll away,
In endless fame survive :
Their glories o'er the wrongs of time
Greatly triumphant live."

During Mr. Prentice's ministry one hundred and forty-six members were received into the church, one hundred and thirty-three on profession of faith.

The Half-way Covenant, as it was termed, had been in use in this church from its formation to the end of Mr. Prentice's ministry. It was introduced into a large part of the Congregational Churches in New England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but proved a great injury to their spirituality and success. The conditions of the Half-way Covenant are not given in any records of the action of this church. No doubt the rule was essentially the same here as in another New England church, which "voted that any person having a competent knowledge, and making a serious profession of the Christian religion, and being of a conversation void of scandal, upon their owning the covenant and subjecting themselves to the government of Christ in this church, shall be admitted to baptism, and have a like privilege for their children." The object of this provision was to draw into a certain partial relation to the church, men of upright lives, who made no claim to religious character, in the hope that they might, by this means, be led to repentance and faith. Its *result* was to veil the necessity of a change of

¹¹An error. His exact age was sixty-nine years and fifteen days.

heart, and to lead men to satisfy themselves in putting a formal and reserved profession of religion in the place of one that should be hearty and entire. The custom was not continued in this church after the close of Mr. Prentice's ministry.¹²

There was an interval of nearly four years between the dismissal of Mr. Prentice and the settlement of his successor. The people heard thirteen candidates and were destitute of preaching one hundred and five Sabbaths, more than half the time. During this interval, in the year 1787, the meeting house was enlarged according to the following votes:—“voted that there be an addition made to the meeting house by putting in fourteen feet into the middle.” “Voted to build a Porch in the front of said house with two pair of stairs in the same to go into the Galleries.” The gallery stairs up to this time had been in the audience room, at each side, about one-fourth the distance from the rear of the church to the pulpit. It was voted to have the house painted inside and out, the outside to be an orange colour, the inside to be a stone colour. It was also “voted to appropriate the two seats in the front Gallery, on the Women's side to the use of the singers.” “Voted that Lieut. Josiah Hemenway, Sylvanus Johnson, Ensign Nathaniel Johnson, Ebenezer Littlefield and Isaac Foster be Quiristers.” These votes contain the first reference I have found to singing in the meeting-house in either town or church records.

¹²In the Church Records, Vol. I, pp. 119 to 122, is a list of one hundred and forty-four persons who “owned the covenant” from March 9, 1728-9, to November 3, 1782. In Church Records II, 203, under date of July 1, 1791, the practice of owning the covenant is spoken of as “formerly used in this church.”

Rev. TIMOTHY DICKINSON was the third pastor of the church, having been called by a unanimous vote of the church and of the town. His reply to the call is as follows :

"To the Church and Congregation in Holliston :

Some time has passed since I received a copy of your Invitation to settle with you in the Gospel Ministry. It has been a weighty subject in every view. There have been many things to be considered, things of the utmost importance to you and to me. As to the conditions of support which you have offered, I value them ; but it is your good will that I most esteem. I have endeavoured, by prayer, to seek for direction, and on the whole, must look upon it as the voice of God. Into his hand I cast myself. In the cause of Christ I am willing to become yours, and accordingly I give my answer to your invitation in the affirmative.

Your friend and servant for Jesus' sake,

TIMOTHY DICKINSON.

Holliston, January 3, 1789."

Mr. Dickinson was ordained February 18, 1789. He was born at Amherst, Massachusetts, June 25, 1761. He says of himself in his private diary : "I have been looking back upon some of the scenes through which God hath carried me. I was a weakly, but, I may say, laborious youth upon the farm of my honored father until I was fifteen years old. Before I was sixteen, I enlisted as a soldier and joined the American army at Ticonderoga : on which duty I fled before Burgoyne, and the same year I saw him a prisoner. At different times I was in the Revolutionary army about fifteen months. By the blessing of God the hardships of a soldier's life seemed to have a happy effect upon my constitution. When I was a few months over eighteen my father consented to have me go to studying."

Another authority says¹³ that the developments of deprav-

¹³History of Mendon Association, p. 131.

ity so visible in the camp, induced him to secure a public education, that he might combat it more successfully. He fitted for College under Rev. Dr. Dwight, afterwards President of Yale College, then teaching a private school at Northampton. His own account continues: "At the age of twenty I entered Dartmouth College. In the winter before I was twenty-one I date my conversion. This was a wonderful season at College and in the towns adjacent. Great numbers can never forget how wonderfully God's work was then carried on. At twenty-four I came out of College. I passed one year after I graduated, instructing the College Grammar School." He studied Theology with Rev. David Tappan, D.D., then of Newbury, afterwards Divinity Professor in Harvard University. He preached for some time at Exeter and Hopkinton, N. H., before coming to Holliston. A few months after his ordination he married Margaret Prentiss, the eldest daughter of his predecessor here.

Mr. Dickinson occupied the house which had been Mr. Prentice's. Fifteen or twenty years since, the building was removed to Irving Place and is at present owned and occupied by Henry Leland. Mr. Prentice's farm, as has already been mentioned, extended from Central street to a point beyond the Methodist Church. It seems probable that this farm was divided between the two daughters of Mr. Prentice, Mrs. Dickinson and Miss Elizabeth Prentiss, Mrs. Dickinson having the southerly portion to about Elm street, and Miss Prentiss the remainder. At this time and for many years after, the land between Mr. Talbot's house and Mr. Chas. S. Wilder's and running back toward the railroad was a rough, rocky sheep pasture.

In the collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society,¹⁴ there is a brief description of Holliston as it was in 1792, in which are some rather quaint remarks. "In the hill near the meeting house," this account states, "there is a bed of limestone. A few kilns of it have been burnt, but as it is so near to Smithfield in Rhode Island and Boston in Massachusetts, and as its quality is inferiour to the limestone in either of those places, there is little prospect of working it at present. Within a few years a considerable improvement has taken place in the method of repairing highways; the stones which for years had been thrown out of the way against the walls, are thrown back, each side of the way is ploughed, the stones are covered with dirt, and the middle of the road is left the highest. Money for the support of schools is raised by the town, then divided to the districts, which engage and pay their own masters. It is the intent that the schools be furnished with masters in the winter and mistresses in the summer. The good education of youth is more generally considered to be a matter of great importance."

Social prayer meetings were not common in the churches of New England in the last century. I have found no allusion to such meetings in connection with this church previous to Mr. Dickinson's ministry. In his diary, under date of Nov. 5, 1794, he writes: "Met with a number at Col. Perry's, for social prayer and conference. These meetings are new to our people." Two months later, he says: "Attended a praying meeting in my chamber" this afternoon. "Eight of us joined together. Some appeared to have freedom." Another record is, "Mrs. Dickinson and I met a

¹⁴Vol. III, p. 18.

number of praying friends at Mr. Underwood's. We passed about two hours together with much freedom and satisfaction." A few years later these meetings had come to be held at regular intervals. June 25, 1800, in speaking of the encouraging circumstances of the church he says: "I can meet with a number to pray together once a fortnight."

Mr. Dickinson was one of the founders of the Massachusetts Missionary Society. His diary mentions some of the earlier steps towards the organization of that body. At Boston, May 30, 1798, he says, "Met with seven other ministers to devise some way to unite in a society to spread the gospel." The next day he writes:—"I met these ministers in a third loft a little after sunrise and we joined in prayer together." August 23, of the same year he "passed the day with Rev. Messrs. Sanford and Alexander, devising a constitution for a Missionary Society."

Mr. Fitch in his century sermon says, that "Mr. Dickinson's ministry was attended with some peculiar and great trials. At one period of it there was much uneasiness, animosity and disturbance which continued in a greater or less degree through several years; so that the parish twice refused to grant his salary. But in each of these instances the people were wise enough to discover their mistakes and rescind their votes. The origin and reason of the difficulties which existed do not appear from any record either of the town or of the church; but are commonly understood to be found in the offensiveness of the doctrines upon which he insisted. They, however, resulted in the calling of a council by the church, June 4, 1804, which advised the dissolution of the pastoral connection subsisting between him and the

people of his charge in the August following, should not an amicable adjustment of difficulties previously take place. Happily those difficulties were so far settled that on the twenty-fifth of the same month in which the council sat, the Parish passed a resolution in favour of the continuance of the connection." Mr. Dickinson's diary gives much the same impression respecting the reason of the opposition to him as that given by Mr. Fitch. He says in 1801 (June 25), "I do hope that I have a few praying friends among my people. There are many, however, who profess to be greatly dissatisfied with my preaching. Why? In my conscience I conclude the true reason is expressed in 1 Cor. ii: 4. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.'" Though his own convictions and his deep sense of duty will not suffer him to change the character of his preaching, he is sometimes sad and weary over the conflict of opinion. "Wo is me," he exclaims in the language of the weeping prophet, "Wo is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention." (Jer. xv: 10.) Mr. Morse, in his history of Sherborn and Holliston, though his own religious views were not like those of Mr. Dickinson, makes this comment: "If Mr. Dickinson had only sprinkled robin shot in the aisles, instead of throwing bombs at the pews, he would have been to the opposition unexceptionable. But that he was right and they wrong, was evident from confessions to him when on his death-bed."

Mr. Dickinson records in 1806, with very strong expressions of esteem, the death of Timothy Rockwood, an aged member of the church who lived a mile south-west of the meeting-house. "He was the poor man's friend," Mr. Dick-

inson says. "He helped them by his counsel, and by placing them in circumstances to help themselves. His advice in cases of difficulty was greatly sought and respected. A great proportion of the town followed him to the grave."

Two young men from Holliston entered the Christian ministry while Mr. Dickinson was pastor. Rev. Drury Fairbank, a member of this church, was ordained at Plymouth, N. H. in the year 1800, and labored successfully in that region for more than thirty years. Rev. Jason Chamberlain was the son of Col. Jason Chamberlain, a prominent man in the town, who lived a few rods south of where Albert N. Miller now lives. The younger Jason graduated at Brown University, was settled as a pastor in Vermont about 1808, and was afterwards Professor of Languages in Vermont University.

Mr. Dickinson died on the 6th of July, 1813, after a lingering and painful illness, at the age of fifty-two. Dr. Emmons, of Franklin preached the funeral sermon, which was published. He says of Mr. Dickinson: "As a preacher he was plain, faithful and affectionate, and as he firmly believed in those doctrines which are usually denominated the doctrines of grace, he felt it his duty often plainly and affectionately to state and illustrate them. . . . No consideration of popularity or self-interest could deter him from a plain and frequent exhibition of those truths which are so offensive to the carnal mind. He was very apparently a man of God who exhibited the nobility and beauty of religion in his private conversation, as well as in his more public and official conduct. . . . The whole tenor of his preaching plainly indicated that he sought to please God rather than men. . . ."

He had a clear, strong and pleasant voice, which enabled him to speak with peculiar propriety and energy. He loved to converse upon religious subjects, and greatly excelled in private discourses with his people. He took heed to his ministry, and left no proper means unemployed to promote the spiritual benefit of his people."

An aged member of this church, who remembers Mr. Dickinson, says: "He was very social and lively. I never had an idea or heard that he had a failing. Ministers were sacred in those days. We used to run into Mr. Dickinson's for any purpose. He kept a dipper at the well, and we all went there from the school for water. At noon Sundays, all the people that chose went into Mr. Dickinson's kitchen to get warm. We were taught the catechism. Mr. Dickinson went into each school to catechise the children once in three months."

The period following the revolutionary war was not a time of great religious prosperity among the churches of New England. During the twenty-four years of Mr. Dickinson's ministry, seventy-nine persons were admitted into the church, sixty-four of them on profession of faith. In his diary, April 12th, 1807, he writes: "Three propounded and their relations read. Such an instance I never knew in this place as three propounded at once." Mr. Dickinson left five children. The oldest son, Joshua, was a much esteemed physician and Christian citizen in Bangor, Maine, where he died a few years since. Of the second son, Thomas, Morse's history says: "He inhabited the homestead, was postmaster and trader, a devoted Christian, an invaluable citizen, and died at the age of about fifty." Two daughters of Thomas are now

members of this church, the direct descendants both of Rev. Mr. Prentice and of Rev. Mr. Dickinson.

Mr. Dickinson's remains were laid near those of his two predecessors in the cemetery adjoining the Town House, where a stone stands with this inscription: "Rev. Timothy Dickinson, A. M., was 24 years Pastor of the church of Christ in this town. He was born at Amherst in this state June 25, 1761: died July 6, 1813: Aged LII. He was interesting and beloved in all the relations of life; constant in his exertions to do good, and ardent in his desires for the prosperity of Zion. As a preacher he was animated, pungent and evangelical: he zealously defended the faith once delivered to the saints, and faithfully taught the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel of Christ. He lived as he died, an example of what he taught."

The church was without a pastor for two years and a half after Mr. Dickinson's decease. A considerable part of the time the pulpit was supplied by a tutor in Brown University who afterward became pastor, Mr. JOSEPHUS WHEATON. Morse's history ascribes the settlement of Mr. Wheaton to the harmonizing efforts and plans of Hon. Elihu Cutler. There were two parties in the parish, as in many New England parishes at that time, and a division of the society seemed not unlikely. Esquire Cutler was very anxious to prevent such a calamity. Though himself not a member of the church, and sympathizing in his views with what was termed the "liberal" wing, he labored with the leaders of each party and succeeded in uniting them upon Mr. Wheaton. There were also other divisions of feeling, the reason of which does not so clearly appear. The tradition is that between an

earnest deacon of the church and another prominent citizen of the town, the prejudice was so strong that neither was willing to vote for the candidate favored by the other, whoever he might be. Mr. Cutler at length persuaded the deacon that Mr. Wheaton being an orthodox man, the deacon ought to vote for him, even if Esquire —— also voted for him. But Mr. Cutler could obtain no such concession from the esquire. Therefore he had an understanding with the deacon which led to the following result. When the vote was taken, Esquire —— waited to see if the deacon would vote for Mr. Wheaton, determined if the deacon did vote for him he himself would not. The deacon did not vote at first. So the esquire's hand went up. The deacon was watching the esquire out of the corner of his eye, and when the esquire voted, up went the deacon's hand and the vote was made unanimous.

Mr. Wheaton was ordained Dec. 6, 1815. Rev. Otis Thompson of Rehoboth preached on the occasion. Mr. Wheaton was born at Rehoboth, Massachusetts, March 16, 1788. He earned money by shoemaking to obtain an education, which leads Mr. Fitch to remark that he was thus prepared for usefulness in a profession where it may be said of him that his feet were shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. He graduated at Brown University in 1812, one of the first scholars in his class. He was a tutor in the University more than two years, studying theology at the same time under the direction of Rev. Otis Thompson, the pastor of his native town.

Mr. Wheaton lived while in Holliston in the house now belonging to the heirs of the late Jonas Pierce, half a mile on

the road to East Holliston. At the commencement of Mr. Wheaton's ministry there was yet nothing that could be called a village in the town. Dwellings were no thicker than farms. On the main street, from what is now East Holliston station to Metcalf's station were only thirteen houses, three of which had once been painted. Elihu Cutler used to say that he had often brought out his yoke of oxen to help market men draw their loaded wagons up the sandy hill from the Town House to the Methodist church and Esquire Leland's. The soil was exhausted, and science had not yet found a remedy. There were no manufactures. Many of the young and enterprising men were leaving the town. The population which in 1776 was more than nine hundred, in 1816 was about one thousand, having gained only one hundred in forty years. Elihu Cutler, his brother James, Col. Ichabod Hawes, Col. Bragg, and at a little later day, William S. and Benjamin F. Batchelder, not to speak of those who are still living, had a prominent part in introducing manufactures, erecting houses, and in various ways promoting the public interests of the town.¹⁵

At the time of Mr. Wheaton's settlement and earlier, there was almost as decidedly a central point and place of assemblage for neighbors, two miles south of this, on the Milford road, as here. Ephraim Littlefield, Esq. kept a tavern there in a house still standing just this side of Beaver Dam Brook. There was a militia company which had its headquarters there. Between that company and the militia company which had its headquarters here, there was strong rivalry, each striving to excel the other in numbers and discipline. They

¹⁵Morse's History, Sherborn and Holliston, pp. 69, 70.

were known as the upper and lower companies. Among the successive officers of the upper company were Captains Lewis Fisher, Abner Johnson, Nathan Leland and Samuel Leland. A uniformed light infantry company was formed in town about 1819, which led to the decline of the militia companies in discipline and in general esteem, until they became almost objects of derision.

A Sabbath school was first organized in connection with this church in the year 1820, with Dea. Timothy Rockwood as superintendent. It numbered about fifty. It is said that many years earlier, during the ministry of Mr. Prentice, in the warmer months of the year, Mrs. Prentice was accustomed to assemble the children of the congregation, during the noon intermission, to recite the catechism. These meetings were held at first at the parsonage, and afterwards, as the number increased, in the meeting-house. But there was nothing like the present Sabbath school before 1820.

The old meeting-house, standing nearly where the Town House now is, had served the town for almost one hundred years. In 1821 the town purchased an acre and a half of land from Mrs. Margaret Dickinson, the widow of the former pastor, and received a gift of a quarter of an acre from Col. Ichabod Hawes, so enlarging the common, and taking in a part of the ground on which this house now stands. A committee was appointed "for the purpose of viewing meeting-houses in other towns, and taking a plan of some one which they thought would best accommodate as well as suit the taste of this town in general." This committee reported, a month later, as follows: "That we have visited the two meeting-houses in Milford, one at Mendon and one at the

West Parish in Medway, and give it as our opinion that Mendon meeting house is constructed on the best plan and is the best moddle that a meeting house can be built at the same expense for convenience, style and beauty, except a little amendments." This report was accepted and a contract was made with Malachi Bullard to build such a meeting-house for the sum of five thousand and two hundred dollars. The cellar, the grading and other expenses brought the entire cost of the house up to seven thousand and three hundred dollars. This does not include the clock which was a gift from Nathaniel Johnson, Esq.

The old meeting-house was pulled down, and the materials were sold in parcels at auction. The late James White, who about that time built the house now occupied by his son William, near the wrench factory, bought the broad pine panels which formed the front of the singers' gallery, and placed them on the side of his kitchen, where they now remain. The central panel had, painted on it, the date of the completion of the meeting-house, 1728, the date of its enlargement and a much earlier date, probably that of the first settlement of the town. But in an evil hour for our interests, an over-tidy servant scrubbed off the time-worn figures and left the panel clean. Mr. White also bought the broad granite stone, some five and a half feet square, which stood before the front door of the old church, and cutting it in two, made door stones for the two entrances to his house, where they are still in use.

The new meeting-house, the same in which we are met today, though it has been repeatedly enlarged, was solemnly dedicated to the worship of God on Wednesday, November 5, 1823.

Mr. Wheaton's sermon on the occasion was printed. The only sentences in it which make any allusion to the circumstances under which the house was erected are the following: "There is a propriety therefore, in erecting suitable houses of worship when circumstances require. It is not necessary to wait until the house which has been occupied for this purpose is ready to crumble into ruins. For when it becomes old and incommodious, when in one part of the year the assembly experience a painful inconvenience from the cold, many will then be induced to spend the Sabbath at home; and in respect to those who may attend, the purposes of religious instruction and public worship will be but partially accomplished. In such circumstances it is proper that a new house should be erected and in a style corresponding with the dignity of the purpose for which it is designed."

"The church and religious society will permit me to congratulate them on their unanimity and success in the erection of this house. My friends, God has greatly smiled on you in this undertaking. The voice of discord has not to my knowledge been heard among you. You committed the work to a man whose fidelity you could trust, and have seen it accomplished to your satisfaction; and what is a circumstance which ought not to pass without grateful notice, the building was raised and has been finished without the slightest injury to any one engaged in it." A bell of sixteen hundred pounds weight was put upon the house in 1823, the first church bell in town.

Mr. Wheaton's health was at this time already declining. He died of consumption, February 4, 1825, not quite thirty-seven years of age. Dr. Ide of Medway preached at his

funeral, and the sermon was printed. In the *Christian Magazine* for July of that year is a somewhat full notice of his life. "In his intercourse with his people," the writer says, "Mr. Wheaton's wisdom was evangelical; first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated. His conciliatory deportment, amiable temper, and dignified yet unaffected manners won the affections of those who were not always pleased with his theological sentiments. Mr. Wheaton was a student as well as a pastor. His literary character and eminent talents as an instructor of youth, made his house a favorite resort of young men fitting for college or perfecting their education. He was an animated and animating preacher. His whole soul appeared in his work." His delivery was uncommonly rapid, "and his animation united with the rich materials of his sermons made him a highly acceptable speaker. It was delightful to listen to and join in his prayers. Not only was there extensive compass and happy pertinence of thought and great use and fluency of expression, but a charming sincerity and fervor of devotion which animated Christians, reproved the lukewarm, and denoted him to be a man of prayer in private as well as in public. During several months toward the close of his sickness, he was entirely blind, and exercised with great bodily pain. Yet he was always patient, usually serene; and sometimes even joyful."¹⁶

Mr. Wheaton was twice married and had four children, three of whom, with his widow, survived him. During the nine years of his ministry forty-six members were admitted to the church, thirty-nine on profession of faith. The first

¹⁶Mr. Fitch's Century Sermon.

four pastors of the church lie near each other in the ancient cemetery adjoining the Town House, where their graves will be found decorated with flowers today. The epitaph of the fourth is as follows:—

“Sacred to the memory of Rev. Josephus Wheaton, who was born in Rehoboth, Mass., March 16th, 1788: graduated at Brown University, September, 1812, settled in the ministry at Holliston, Dec. 6th, 1815 & died Feb. 4th, 1825, in the 37th year of his age. He was an affectionate husband & kind parent: an interesting companion & amiable friend: an accomplished scholar & sound divine: an instructive preacher & watchful shepard. In life he was beloved & respected both by his people & his friends, & in death lamented by all who knew him.

Forgive, blest shade, the tributary tear,
That mourns thy exit from a world like this;
Forgive the wish that would have kept thee here,
And staid thy progress to the courts of bliss.”

The fifth pastor of the church was Rev. CHARLES FITCH. He was installed January 4, 1826. Rev. Dr. Wisner of the Old South Church in Boston preached on the occasion. Mr. Fitch was born in Williamstown, Mass., June 26, 1799, being the son of Rev. Ebenezer Fitch, D. D., first President of Williams College. He graduated at that college in 1818, and pursued his professional studies at the Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey. He was ordained pastor of the Presbyterian church of Cherry Valley, New York, August 22, 1822. He was twenty-six years of age when he came to Holliston. He boarded at first, for a year or more, with Dea. Asaph Leland, in the house now occupied by Charles Wilder in East Holliston. He afterwards lived in the Johnson house on the corner of Winter street, then in the house now occupied by Amos Phipps, three-fourths of a mile south of the meeting-house, then in the house now owned by Dea.

George Batchelder, which was built by individuals for the minister's use in 1827 or 1828, then in the house of the late Jonas Pierce, and then again in the Amos Phipps house which he bought.

One of the earlier services of Mr. Fitch in Holliston was the preparation of a century sermon. The first one hundred years of the town's history were completed December 3, 1824. But, as the preface of Mr. Fitch's sermon states, in consequence of the ill health of Mr. Wheaton, who was unable to prepare a discourse for the occasion, the subject was delayed for two years. On Monday, the fourth of December, 1826, Mr. Fitch delivered the sermon. It was printed by vote of the town, and is one of the most valuable authorities for our earlier history.

Capt. Aaron Eames, a member of the church, died in 1826, and by will left his farm (which is now the Town Farm for the support of the poor) and other property to the Town or Parish for the support of "evangelical Calvinistical preaching." The property amounted to seven or eight thousand dollars, and now constitutes the Eames Ministerial Fund. It is in the hands of Trustees, chosen when vacancies occur, by the Parish connected with this church.

There were large additions to the church during Mr. Fitch's ministry. Special religious interest was evident in the congregation in December, 1826. In January Mr. Fitch appointed a meeting for religious inquiry which was attended from week to week by increasing numbers, until in midsummer about sixty were usually present. Eighty-five were admitted to the church on profession of faith in the years 1827 and 1828. There was special religious interest again in

the summer of 1830, as a result of which twenty-six members were admitted to the church. "In September, 1831, a protracted meeting of four days, previously agreed upon by the church, was held and was fully attended." Mr. Fitch records that "it was evident from the commencement that the Holy Spirit was moving upon the minds of the congregation. As the meetings progressed the anxiety became more deep and general, till at the close more than two hundred avowed their concern on the subject of their soul's salvation by readily separating themselves from the congregation and retiring to the inquiry room for special instruction and prayer. About thirty professed hope of having submitted to the Gospel proposals of salvation during the meeting, or within the week subsequent to its close." At this point opposition arose which checked the progress of the revival and resulted in the dismissal of Mr. Fitch, May 1, 1832. Many of those who had become interested in religion united with the Methodist church which had been formed in 1831.

The whole number added to this church during Mr. Fitch's ministry of six years was one hundred and forty-five. Of these, one hundred and thirty-five were admitted on profession of faith. After leaving Holliston, Mr. Fitch preached at Batavia, New York, and taught at Buffalo and at Trenton, New Jersey. From 1838 to 1840 he was Chaplain of the Penitentiary at Columbus, Ohio. Then for eight years he was agent of the American Bible Society in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. In 1851 he became pastor of the Presbyterian church at Mt. Vernon, Indiana, and resigned that position to enter the army as Chaplain, May 5, 1861. He lost his health in this service, and returning home on furlough, died at Evansville, Indiana, May 3, 1863.

The sixth pastor of this church was Rev. ELIJAH DEMOND. He was born at Rutland, Mass., November 1, 1790; graduated at Dartmouth College in 1816 and at Andover Seminary in 1820. He was ordained pastor of the Second church in West Newbury in 1821, and installed at Lincoln in 1827. His installation over this church was on the thirty-first of October, 1832, when he was forty-two years of age. The eccentric pastor at Hopkinton, Rev. Nathaniel Howe, offered the consecrating prayer. Mr. Demond lived while in Holliston in the house now owned by Dea. George Batchelder.

The meeting-house, up to this time had not been warmed. In 1829 the subject had been agitated, and a committee appointed to report upon the best method. But at the next meeting, the town first "voted to accept the report of the committee, relative to the best method of warming the meeting-house," and then "voted not to warm the meeting-house at all." But in 1833 a vote was passed to warm the house, and a committee was "authorized to procure a stove or stoves and place them in the meeting-house at their discretion, and that the funnel of said stove be extended through the roof of the meeting-house." There was decided opposition to this innovation. On the first Sunday after the stove was put in, one of the leading opposers of the change came out of the meeting-house bitterly complaining of the headache which the heat of the stove had caused him. But the laugh was turned upon him when it appeared that, as the day was mild, no fire had been lighted.

In 1835 the church and the active religious life of the community were severely bereaved by the decease of Miss Elizabeth Prentiss, youngest daughter of the second pastor

of the church. She lived in the house now occupied by George W. Phipps, opposite the Parsonage. This house was built for her about the year 1820. She lived to do good. Her personal expenses were regulated on the most economical scale in order that she might have the means for benefiting others. A notice of her decease in the *Boston Recorder* says: "One of the most influential ministers of New England, of the present day, relates the following incident: 'As I was at work in my shop, Miss Prentiss stopped before the door and requested an interview. 'Have you not,' said she, 'felt it your duty to prepare for the ministry? It appears to me that it is your duty, and here are fifty dollars to begin.' This mechanic she followed with her prayers and kindness, till the day of his ordination, and that day was kept by her, according to her diary, as a day of supplication for his usefulness."

The minister here referred to was the Rev. Dr. Joel Hawes of Hartford. He was a Medway boy. Miss Prentiss encouraged and assisted him in getting his education; and when he was able to repay the amount she had advanced, she used the money to assist another young man, who has now spent a long life of usefulness in the Christian ministry. Professor Morse says of her: "The prayers of a godly ancestry were answered in her early and sound conversion; and throughout her long life, she was zealously and uniformly devoted to the immortal good of her race, of every color and clime. Precious and admonitory is her memory. Who will arise to take her place in the church and lead a life of prayer, making all whom she meets think of preparation for the life to come, and of the immediate duty of doing more for God in the world?"

Up to 1836, the business connected with this religious

society had been transacted in a parochial town meeting to which all the inhabitants of the town were summoned, who had not by legal steps obtained the right to pay taxes for the support of religious worship elsewhere. In this year the parish was fully separated from the town, and a new organization was formed including only such as chose to ally themselves with it. Mr. Demond was dismissed by council April 11, 1836. During his ministry of three and a half years, twenty-nine were admitted to the church, twelve on profession of faith. After leaving Holliston, Mr. Demond preached at Princeton, Northbridge, Douglass, Shrewsbury, Waquoit, Chilwark and East Falmouth, and spent the last years of his life in Westboro. He died there July 20, 1877, in his eighty-eighth year.

Rev. JOHN STORRS, seventh pastor of the church, was installed December 20, 1836. Rev. Joel Hawes of Hartford preached the installation sermon, which was printed by vote of the church. Mr. Storrs was born at Mansfield, Conn., September 6, 1801. He graduated at Middlebury College in 1824; studied divinity with Rev. Mr. Booth at Coventry, Conn., and was ordained at Barre, Mass., in 1829. He was afterwards settled at Norwich, Conn., before coming to Holliston. At the time of his installation here, he was thirty-five years of age. His residence here was in the George T. Daniels house, which he purchased. Mrs. Storrs, a woman of eminent ability and piety, kept a young ladies' school in what was built for a shop, in the garden connected with the house. In 1837 or 1838 a small organ was placed in the meeting-house, and the pulpit was lowered.

About this time some of the Mormon apostles came to

this region and preached in this and the neighboring towns. In Hopkinton they gained many adherents. It is said that Brigham Young was originally from Hopkinton, though he left there at an earlier period than this of which we now speak. A considerable number of persons in Holliston became converts to their views, including a deacon of the church and some other members. They removed to Nauvoo, Illinois, then the headquarters of the sect, and afterwards to Utah.

In 1842, Charles Chamberlain, a "son of Holliston," was ordained at Berkeley, Mass. His mother was a member of this church. Mr. Chamberlain graduated at Brown University in 1836 and studied at Andover and Union Seminaries. He is now pastor at East Granby, Conn.

Mr. Storrs was dismissed from the pastoral care of this church, November 8, 1842. During his ministry here of six years, fifty-six members were admitted to the church, of whom thirty-six joined on profession of faith. After leaving Holliston, Mr. Storrs was an agent of the Bible Society in Connecticut for three years, then preached two years in Middleboro, and in 1849 became pastor of the church in Winchendon, Mass., where he died in May, 1854, at the age of fifty-two years. His funeral sermon was preached by Rev. Abijah P. Marvin of Winchendon, and it is a pleasant evidence of the strength of affection and interest with which Mr. Storrs was remembered in Holliston, though he had been gone from here more than eleven years, that the funeral discourse was printed by the request and at the expense of some of his former parishioners here.

The eighth pastor of the church was Rev. TIMOTHY D. P.

STONE. He was born at Cornwall, Conn., and was the son of Rev. Timothy Stone. He was adopted by Rev. Dr. Ebenezer Porter, professor in the Theological Seminary at Andover, graduated at Amherst College in 1834, studied theology at Andover and came to Holliston as his first parish. He was ordained here March 1, 1843, Rev. Dr. Leonard Woods of Andover preaching on the occasion. Mr. Stone, while in Holliston owned and occupied the house now belonging to James F. Fiske.

In the year 1844 (October 16), a son of this church, Alfred Hawes, was ordained in this house as an evangelist, before starting for his missionary field at the west. He was born in Holliston, April 2, 1818, joined this church on profession of faith at the age of sixteen, graduated at Brown University, pursued his theological studies at Andover, and declining an invitation to settle in Massachusetts, carried out a long-cherished purpose to labor upon the frontier. Rev. Mortimer Blake of Mansfield preached the ordination sermon, and Rev. Mr. Stone gave the charge. Mr. Hawes, under direction of the Home Missionary Society, became pastor of a missionary church at Marion, Grant County, Indiana. A few months later, this church sent to the church in Marion, a baptismal bowl and set of plate for the communion table. Mr. Hawes labored at Marion with devoted earnestness and success for nearly ten years, when his health failed under excessive cares, and he died August 31, 1854. A memorial discourse was preached here by Rev. Mr. Tucker, then pastor, which was published.

In 1845 the meeting-house was refitted and painted at the expense of seventeen or eighteen hundred dollars. In May,

1847, the Sabbath school was brought into closer relations with the church according to the following action of the church which has been the rule of procedure ever since:—
“Voted to appoint a committee to take charge of the Sabbath school, as directors, who shall appoint a superintendent and attend to all its affairs.” The railroad to Holliston was opened July 4, 1847, and the most of that section of the village lying beyond the railroad has grown up since that time.

In 1849 Mr. Stone sought a dismissal on account of his health, and on the second of March, his ministry of six years here closed. Seventy-seven members were admitted to the church under his labors, thirty-seven on profession of faith. He immediately became chaplain of the State Reform School at Westboro, was afterwards principal of the State Normal School of Connecticut, and is at present giving instruction in elocution in Albany, New York. After Mr. Stone left, the church was only three months without a pastor.

Rev. JOSHUA T. TUCKER supplied the pulpit within a few weeks of Mr. Stone's dismissal, and gaining the interest and confidence of the people, was installed the ninth pastor of the church, June 6, 1849. Rev. Wm. M. Rogers of the Central Church, Boston, preached on the occasion, Mr. Stone giving the address to the people, and the venerable Dr. Ide of Medway for the third time giving the charge to a Holliston pastor. Mr. Tucker was born in Milton, Mass., graduated at Yale College in 1833, and pursued his theological studies at Lane Seminary, Cincinnati. He was ordained by the Presbytery of Alton, Illinois, in October, 1837, and preached at Chester and Rushville, Illinois, and at Hannibal and St.

Louis, Missouri, up to 1848. On coming to Holliston, Mr. Tucker boarded for a year at Dr. Burnap's, and then built and occupied the house on Church street now belonging to Lewis W. Slocum. At the commencement of his ministry about one hundred and fifty families were connected with the congregation, and the church numbered one hundred and seventy-four.

In 1850 the meeting-house was repaired and enlarged. The first three or four years of Mr. Tucker's labors here were a period of spiritual prosperity and increase for the church. But the most abundant season of ingathering during his ministry, or indeed during the past history of the church, occurred in the year 1858, when the Divine power was manifested so widely and so mightily among the churches of our land. One hundred and thirteen were added to the church on profession of faith during that year.

Mr. Tucker was absent in Europe on account of his health for five months in the summer of 1859. Rev. William M. Thayer supplied the pulpit for a considerable part of the time. In the pastor's absence the meeting-house was raised up, rooms for social meetings were arranged in the basement, and an addition was built at the west end for the accommodation of the organ and choir. After these changes, the house was again solemnly dedicated to the service of God on Friday, December 2, 1859, Rev. Andrew L. Stone of Boston preaching on the occasion. In May (31st), 1860, the beautiful cemetery at Lake Grove was consecrated, with an address by Rev. J. C. Bodwell, and consecrating prayer by Mr. Tucker. In June, 1860, the General Association of Massachusetts met at Holliston. On the twenty-eighth of August, 1860, the Baptist church in Holliston was organized.

Two young men, members of this church, entered the Christian ministry during Mr. Tucker's pastorate. Edward B. French was ordained pastor of the Congregational church in Chatham in May, 1860. He is now residing in the town of Mexia, Limestone County, Texas. Geo. F. Walker was ordained at Wellfleet, in July, 1863. He is now preaching in Blackstone, Mass. It was also during Mr. Tucker's years in Holliston that a family of young men entered the ministry, who were born and passed their early years here: Lyman, Elijah and Calvin Cutler, sons of Amos and Sarah Cutler. The mother was a member of this church, an earnest, Christian woman. Lyman Cutler was ordained at Pepperell, Mass., in January, 1851, and after a brief but brilliant and promising ministry, he died as pastor of the church at Newton, April 28, 1855. Elijah Cutler was ordained at Conway, Mass., in 1863, and is now connected with the management of the Massachusetts Bible Society at Boston. Calvin Cutler was ordained in 1862, and since 1867 has been pastor of the church at Auburndale.

In 1866 there was again a period of special religious interest in the congregation, and forty-three members were added to the church on profession of faith. In December of that year, Mrs. Ann S. Leland, a member of the church died, leaving to the church a bequest of one hundred dollars as a permanent fund, of which the interest is "to be appropriated for the benefit of the poor belonging to the church."

In 1867, the state of Mr. Tucker's health was such that he felt constrained to seek a dismissal. On the thirty-first of March he preached a farewell discourse which was printed, and to which I am indebted for many facts connected with

his labors here. Though Mr. Tucker resigned his pastoral care of this church and parish at the date named, for reasons of convenience the formal dismissal took place in November, by the action of the council which ordained his successor. In the eighteen years of Mr. Tucker's service here, four hundred and fifty-two members were added to the church, three hundred and thirteen of these on profession of their faith. At the close of his ministry the church numbered four hundred and nine. Soon after leaving Holliston, Dr. Tucker became pastor of the Second Congregational church in Chicopee, where he labored for ten years until 1877, when impaired health induced him to resign, and he is now residing in Dorchester. He has published several books of a religious character, and has, for the last twenty years, been connected editorially with different newspapers and periodicals.

REV. WILLIAM H. SAVAGE, tenth pastor of the church, was ordained November 7, 1867. Rev. Prof. Park of Andover, preached the sermon, and Dr. Tucker gave the address to the people. Mr. Savage was born in the town of Woolwich, Maine, and graduated at Bowdoin College in 1858. He became Professor of Mathematics in Delaware College in 1859. In 1862 he enlisted in the Seventeenth Maine Regiment, was appointed Captain of Company A in that regiment, and served in the army of the Potomac. He afterwards pursued his theological studies at Andover.

In Holliston, Mr. Savage boarded successively with Deacon George Batchelder, Seth Thayer and Alfred Cutler, and afterwards kept house where John Allen now resides. His ministry here was brief, comprising little over two years. In the year 1868 there was special religious interest in the

church and congregation, and thirty-seven persons made public profession of their faith. One of these, Franke A. Warfield, immediately commenced studies for the Christian ministry, was ordained in 1871, and is now pastor of the Union Congregational church in Boston. Near the close of the year 1869, Mr. Savage, for reasons having respect to the health of himself and his family, asked a dismissal, and his ministry here terminated December 30, of that year. During the term of his service here fifty members were admitted to the church, forty-one on profession of their faith. Mr. Savage was immediately settled as pastor of the Congregational church in Jacksonville, Illinois, where he remained several years. In November, 1876, he was installed pastor of the Unitarian church in Leominster, Mass.

Rev. HENRY S. KELSEY became the eleventh pastor of the church, October 13, 1870. Rev. Jacob M. Manning, D.D., of the Old South church in Boston, preached the installation sermon. Mr. Kelsey was born at Evans Mills, Jefferson County, New York, graduated at Amherst College in 1855, and studied theology at the seminaries in New York City and East Windsor, Conn. Before entering the ministry he taught several years in Amherst College, and was Professor in Beloit College, Wisconsin. He was ordained at Granby, Mass., in October, 1863, and installed at Rockville, Conn., in 1866. In Holliston, Mr. Kelsey lived a year in the house now occupied by F. A. Stone, and then in the new parsonage which was built at his suggestion, in part by subscription, and in part as an investment of a portion of the Eames Ministerial Fund. The deed stands in the name of the Trustees of that fund.

May 18, 1871, the church voted "that we extend the right, or desire the female members of this church to exercise their right to vote in all business of the church." June 15, 1871, the church voted that a deacon be chosen once in two years, to hold office for six years. Up to that time there had been no limit set to the term of office of the deacons. In 1873, Mr. Kelsey having received an invitation to become pastor of another church, asked a release from his connection with this people, and was dismissed March 6. He was installed at Woburn, Mass., in the same month, and is now acting pastor of the College street church in New Haven, Conn. In the two years of his ministry here, nineteen members were added to the church, seven on profession of faith.

In July, 1873, the church voted to discontinue the Sunday afternoon services during the months of July and August, and to resume such services on and after the first Sunday in September. A similar rule was followed in the summers of 1874 and of 1875, the afternoon services being resumed in the autumn of each year. In 1876, after the omission of the afternoon services through the summer, they were not resumed in the autumn, and March 4, 1877, the church took the following action:

"*Resolved*, that in the opinion of this church (as here represented); the interests of religion and cause of the Master will be better served by changing the Sabbath afternoon preaching service to the Sabbath evening."

The twelfth and present pastor of this church was installed September 11, 1873, Rev. Edmund K. Alden, D.D. of South Boston preaching on the occasion. Rev. Dr. Tucker was moderator of the council and led in the installing prayer.

Rev. Mr. Kelsey gave the address to the people. Rev. Mr. Dowse of Sherborn gave the charge to the candidate, assisting for the fifth time in settling a pastor over this church. Early in this ministry the church and community were bereaved and weakened by the decease of several men in the maturity of their years and influence, who had been prominent in the church and the town. Dr. Sewell G. Burnap, Appleton Bullard, Elias Bullard, Esq., Stephen Metcalf and William S. Batchelder passed away in rapid succession. There was more than usual religious interest in the church and congregation in 1876, and forty members were added to the church on profession of faith.

July 4, 1876, in connection with public exercises commemorating the completion of a century of the national existence, Rev. Edmund Dowse of Sherborn delivered an address, reviewing the history of Holliston from the beginning. The address was printed by vote of the town, and preserves many facts that will be of value in all future researches into our earlier history. In the present year some changes and improvements have been made in our house of worship. The rooms in the basement have been remodelled and adjusted to the present needs of the church and congregation, by the diligence and enterprise of the Ladies' Benevolent Society. Other tokens of a disposition to keep the house of our religious assembling fresh and attractive, are before us today.

I will not forbear to mention also, among the facts of interest to all who seek the public good — although it is not yet history — that the year 1879 seems likely to witness the opening of a free public library in Holliston, for which we are largely indebted to the generous designs of the late Elias

Bullard, Esq., and to the faithfulness with which his family have carried out his unrecorded wishes. Mr. Seth Thayer also made a large subscription to this object, and others have contributed with readiness and liberality.

The number of members admitted to the church in the past six years is one hundred and three. Of these, sixty-five have been received on profession of faith. The membership of the church at the close of the period we are reviewing, November 11, 1878, was three hundred and seventy-seven. The number connected with the Sabbath school was three hundred and sixty-nine. The entire number, according to the records, of those connected with the church for the one hundred and fifty years of its history, terminating in November last, was one thousand three hundred and seventy. As nearly as can be determined one thousand and five of these first took the vows of Christ upon them here; three hundred and sixty-five came to us from other churches of our Lord.

We have been studying an honorable record. We have fallen upon many traces of generous and manly and Christian character. How simply and earnestly those ancient worthies did their work for Christ and for us, laying, in toil, solid foundations on which we can easily plant our lighter and more graceful structures. We count him fortunate today, who can find the name of some ancestor of his among the simply clad and toil-worn saints of our earlier history.

And the world goes on. We have started on a new half-century. We are making the history of the church for other times. Fifty years from now, a hundred years from now, eager and we trust, reverent eyes will search through the

records of today, and be gladdened with the proof they can find of our sincerity and trustworthiness. How our children and our children's children will delight to discover the names from which they trace their lineage, in connections which reveal a large hearted and generous piety.

May the Lord bless this ancient church! May He fill her sons and her daughters with ever richer grace! May He multiply the number of those who shall gladly set their names to her simple vows!

AND TO HIS MOST BLESSED NAME MAY THERE BE HONOR
AND GLORY FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION!

